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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we are grateful that Your will prevails when reliance on humanity is futile.

Give our Senators the wisdom to understand that without Your help, they cannot succeed. Today, use them to work and act to accomplish Your purposes on Earth. Help them not to repay evil with evil but plant seeds of goodness that will bring a harvest of joy.

Arise, O Lord. Lift Yourself up in these dangerous times to bring Your peace to our hearts. Help us to remember that You save the upright in heart, and Your justice will sustain us. Keep us from conceiving troubles and embracing falsehoods, as we focus on loving and serving You.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 4, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. PAUL thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

TAX REFORM AND THE BUDGET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, Chairman HATCH held another hearing on a subject that is incredibly important to the economic future of our country: tax reform.

For too long, our economy has failed to live up to its full potential. For too long, Americans have suffered through stagnant paychecks, a lack of steady work, and retirement that can seem to slip further away by the day. These are the forgotten men, women, and families of the last decade. For many Americans living on the coasts, working in Silicon Valley, or in finance, the recession of 2008 to 2009 may seem like just a moment in history, but for too many Americans, the last 10 years have been a lost decade where our economy has stumbled along and opportunities have declined for American workers and their families.

Tax reform represents the single most important thing we can do today to get our economy back on track and give American workers a leg up. It is our once-in-a-generation opportunity to replace an outdated tax code that holds us back with one that works for American families and small businesses. We want to lower taxes and simplify rates. We want to expand job creation and grow paychecks. Put another way, we want to take more money out of Washington's pocket and

put it in yours. That is the essential goal of tax reform. That is our message to the American people. It is what I believe. It is what Chairman HATCH believes. It is what Chairman ENZI believes as well.

Chairman ENZI has an important role to play in this process, too, because later today he will lead his committee in marking up a comprehensive budget for fiscal year 2018 that will help our country achieve balance by reining in Federal spending. It will also help our economy grow, and one of the ways it will do so is by providing legislative tools to advance tax reform. I thank the Budget Committee for all its good work so far, and I look forward to its continued efforts to get our fiscal house in order and our economy back on a path to solid growth after the lost decade of disappointment I just spoke about.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, earlier this week, I filed cloture motions on four qualified nominees for various agencies throughout the Federal Government. I shouldn't have had to. In different times, we may have even considered them on voice votes. But this is where we are, and now it is time to advance and confirm them as soon as possible.

Later this morning, the Senate will consider Eric Hargan to be Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. As the people of Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands continue to recover from a series of devastating hurricanes, Mr. Hargan's expertise in disaster response and public health will help the Department respond to these crises. I look forward to confirming Mr. Hargan soon so he can help coordinate multiple agencies under his supervision to respond to the hurricanes, deliver relief, and help save lives.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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After that, this afternoon we will take up the nomination of Randal Quarles, the President's nominee to help oversee the Federal Reserve System. Mr. Quarles brings with him both domestic and international financial experience from multiple administrations, and he will be a strong guide for our Nation's monetary policy. We also intend to confirm Mr. Quarles to the position of Vice Chair for Supervision. This is an essential role created by Dodd-Frank, and it is critical that Mr. Quarles begin this work over at the Fed.

Tomorrow, the Senate will confirm Lee Francis Cissna to be Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Mr. Cissna has a wealth of experience in immigration policy, serving in senior policy positions in both the Bush and Obama administrations and then working for the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. He was voted out of committee with bipartisan support. I look forward to his confirmation to this important role.

Then we will consider Callista Gingrich, whom the President has nominated to be our Nation's Ambassador to the Holy See. Ms. Gingrich's work will continue the strong relationship between our Nation and the Vatican, building upon shared values, goals, and global responsibilities.

I thank each of these nominees for their willingness to serve our Nation. They are each well qualified and suited for their role. I look forward to the Senate confirming them very soon.

TRIBUTE TO DR. TOM APPLETON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to congratulate Dr. Tom Appleton of Lexington, KY, on his retirement from the History Department at Eastern Kentucky University. One of Kentucky's premier historians, Tom has spent his career writing about the Commonwealth's rich heritage. He joined ECU's faculty in the fall of 2000, and over the years, he has left a positive imprint on his students, his field, and his State.

He has also proved to be an invaluable resource for me. A number of years ago, I began a series of talks focused on former U.S. Senators from Kentucky. In each speech, I have tried to convey a bit of political history through the lives of these distinguished individuals. Tom's counsel has been invaluable in my work to prepare these speeches and pay tribute to some of Kentucky's prominent political leaders.

Before joining ECU's faculty nearly 20 years ago, Tom spent more than two decades at the Kentucky Historical Society. It certainly shows. Even the TV show "Jeopardy" has used him as a historical resource. Tom has been the co-editor of six books on the history of the American South, including a groundbreaking look into the lives of Kentucky women, and he is currently working on a biography of Kentucky's

own A.B. "Happy" Chandler, who served as Governor, Senator, and baseball's second commissioner. Tom's passion for Kentucky's rich history is obvious.

He has been a wonderful friend and resource for me, a real champion and advocate for our Commonwealth, and has made a lasting impact on the next generation through his teaching. As one former student recalled, "Dr. Appleton's mission in teaching Kentucky history was less about imparting facts and dates and more about ensuring that students departed the class with an enhanced understanding of the rich cultural tapestry of Kentucky. He admonished students to be worthy of the proud legacy of our Commonwealth's great statesmen, military leaders, writers, and sports legends." That is a legacy to be proud of.

After his final semester of teaching, Tom could be forgiven for wanting to retire from his work as a historian altogether, but that is not Tom. He plans to continue his research and writing about the lives and events that shaped our home State, and I plan to continue reading his fascinating take on our shared Kentucky heritage.

I wish Tom well, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Tom Appleton on a truly remarkable career.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Hargan nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Eric D. Hargan, of Illinois, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand the administration intends to submit its first request for disaster aid for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands today. It is a good first step, but it is just the start of the financial aid we will need to provide to the American citizens in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

I urge my colleagues to work quickly to add additional and urgent funding for recovery, like community development block grant dollars, just as we did for Texas after Hurricane Harvey, with the understanding that an additional and more comprehensive request for Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Florida, Texas, and the western wildfires will be coming from the administration once the damage assessments are complete.

LAS VEGAS MASS SHOOTING

Mr. President, returning to the events in Las Vegas on Sunday, we cannot let this American tragedy, another in a long line of American tragedies, fall out of our hearts and minds too quickly.

Let us pledge to be there for the families of the 59 Americans who were killed and the over 500 Americans who are still injured and recovering. Seeing the pictures of so many of these beautiful, young people in the prime of life—young, excited about the world, some of them newly married, some of them a little older with young children—breaks your heart. So not just today or this week, but in the weeks and months to come, let us pledge to continue to show our gratitude to those firefighters and cops, the emergency and medical personnel, and all the other first responders who rushed to the scene. Let us pledge to remember the acts of everyday heroism that are a beacon of light in this moment of darkness: the lines to give blood that stretched around the block at 6 a.m., the teachers who went to school the day after the shooting to try and give their students a sense of normalcy. I hope these are the things President Trump highlights in his visit to Las Vegas today.

And one more thing: President Trump has an opportunity to wrench his party out of the grasp of the NRA and get our country and our Congress to start talking about commonsense gun safety reforms. Before President Trump ran for office, he repeatedly supported several sane, rational gun safety measures, including the assault weapons ban and longer waiting periods to purchase a gun. As recently as 2012, President Trump supported President Obama's response to Sandy Hook. In the wake of Sandy Hook, President Obama called for action. In the wake of